

THE MAN WHO MADE THE MONTREAL STAR.

HUGH GRAHAM, ESQ.

A NEWSPAPER which has become a handsome property in a few years, which has attained an immense circulation according to Canadian ideas, and which is noted as a purveyor of news, must afford some instructive lessons to Canadian publishers. The man who has made this paper what it is must have a career worthy at least of some study and analysis.

Hugh Graham, the proprietor and publisher of The Montreal Star, was born at Athelstone, Huntingdon County, Quebec, about 45 years ago. His father was one of the many shrewd Scottish land owners in that county, and the son received his education at the Huntingdon Academy or collegiate institute. From there he drifted, as numerous other Huntingdon youths have done, to Montreal *thet* as now the commercial centre of the province. Young Graham's entry into newspaper work was the most natural thing in the world. His uncle was Mr. W. H. Parsons, who had for some years published the old Commercial Advertiser in Montreal, and whose reputation was that of a journalist of undoubted capacity. About this time The Montreal Witness, which had been issuing as an evening one-cent paper, raised its price to one penny, and Mr. Parsons met the new situation by turning his morning paper, The Advertiser, into The Evening Telegram, also at one penny. Hugh Graham could hardly have fallen into better hands than those of his uncle. Mr. Parsons was a skilful writer and possessed an excellent idea of newspaper work. There can be no doubt that in this environment young Graham laid the basis of those methods of conducting a paper which he has since turned to so much success in The Star.

The Witness soon reverted to its one-cent price, and The Evening Telegram, after about a year's existence, discontinued publication. Hugh Graham then went to The Gazette, and was for some time the secretary-treasurer of The Gazette Company. Not for long, however, because in December, 1869, he started The Evening Star, a one-cent daily. With him was associated George Langan, a journalist of exceptional brilliance, who had already made his mark in Montreal as a satirist and humorist in The Free Lance, and whose subsequent career on The New York and Philadelphia papers gave him a continental reputation. One of the writers for the new paper was Marshall, another Montreal journalist, and the paper was published by "Marshall & Co."

This arrangement lasted for several years and The Star had, like many similar ventures, to encounter the adverse circumstances that beset new enterprises. I have no personal know-

ledge of The Star, or of Hugh Graham, during this period, nor, indeed, for some years subsequently. The paper, however, made its way slowly. Montreal was not then the newspaper centre it is now. The existing papers, notably The Witness, Gazette, and Herald, almost monopolized the English section of the reading public. The Star's rival in the evening field, The Witness, was a strongly intrenched competitor, and years of dauntless effort were required to create a constituency for the new paper. Hugh Graham's share in this must have been considerable, because as soon as the paper passed entirely into his own hands and his early associates had withdrawn to other fields of labor, The Star's progress became more rapid, and it began to acquire strong friends and a constituency of its own.

It is difficult to speak with absolute certainty on some of these points. Mr. Graham is exceedingly averse to biographies or sketches of himself, and has always declined to assist in their preparation in any way. Consequently some of the data in this article have had to be obtained by inquiring elsewhere, while the

photograph which adorns it I may as well confess - was secured without his knowledge or consent. Even after Mr. Graham acquired full control, the paper had several years of struggle before it. Most of his time was spent in promoting the commercial side of the venture, though his control of editorial policy and the news department has always been close and constant. The editors were for some years after Langan's departure not men of special note. As writers they acquired no fame, and though Mr. W. H. Parsons, who had retired in ill-health several years before to live at Sorci, was invited to become editor he was unable to remain in the position for more than a brief period. In this way The Star began first to attract notice for enterprise in giving early and exclusive news, instead of for its opinions or literary merit. This, I firmly believe, gave it the first fillip toward success. Mr. Graham's



HUGH GRAHAM,
Publisher of The Montreal Star.

heart was in this part of the work, and as opportunity opened he developed his capacity for giving the best news of the day, and turning it out in a style to attract attention. Of course he had some valuable assistance. In 1878 Edward G. O'Connor became managing editor, and during the eight years he continued either in that post or as general superintendent of all the departments in the establishment, he was a tower of strength to the paper. His untiring industry, a marked faculty for organization and management, an alertness in getting news and a strong sense of propriety as to how a paper should be conducted, were potent elements in the situation. At this time also Henry Dalby, the present talented managing editor, joined the paper, which gained much by his incisive literary style and ripe experience. To these and to other good men, like P. D. Ross,